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HISTORIAN

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

MARCH 2006

MARCH HAPPENINGS

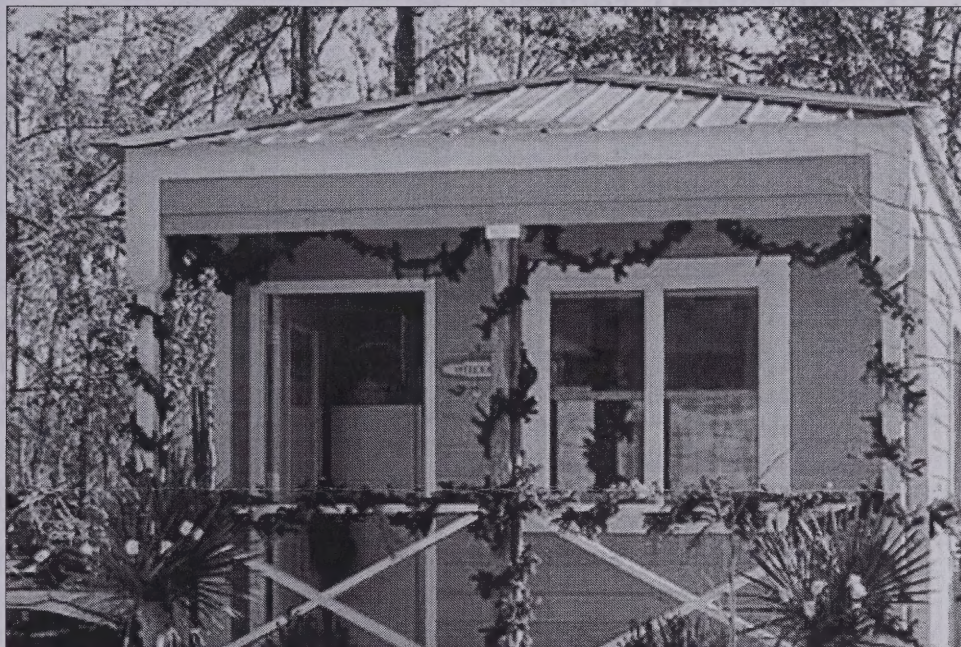
The March luncheon meeting will be Thursday, the 16th at 12:00 noon. Please call for reservations as the seating is limited. (467-4090) The guest speaker for March is Christina Villa, author.

If you think the Historical Society might have old pictures that you might want, which you may have lost in Hurricane Katrina, we will be happy to make prints for you for a nominal fee. Please call for more details.

On Thursday, March 23, at 9:00A.M., members will gather at the Lobrano House to work in the yard. Bring a bag lunch, drinks will be provided), garden tools and bug spray! We need all the help we can get to renew our landscaping.

Once again we are including envelopes in the newsletters of those of you who have not paid your dues. This is for your convenience. We thank you in advance for supporting our organization.

We are still searching for some of our displaced members. If you have not sent us a change of address, please do so. Your newsletter will get to you a lot faster!



First Katrina Cottage: completed in December and given to Suzie Burton and Josh Ward

At the February meeting, our speaker, John Anderson, architect, spoke on the future plans for the Bay St. Louis and Waveland area. Afterwards he gave me a website to go to for more information. I know many of you still do not have access to your computers, so I thought I would present the article here in our newsletter.

KATRINA COTTAGES

edited by Dale St. Amant

On January 16, 2006, the six day Mississippi Renewal forum and its follow-up

produced an array of tools and plans—from city and neighborhood plans to transportation improvements and house designs—for coastal Mississippians and their local leaders to use in rebuilding and renewing their devastated communities.

Since Katrina's surge leveled 80 percent or more of Mississippi cities such as Waveland and Bay St. Louis and wiped out whole neighborhoods in larger cities such as Gulfport and Biloxi, taking with it most traces of the cities' rich architectural heritage, the charrette participants who focused on housing recognized two urgent needs. The

THE

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Editor - Dale St. Amant

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HOURS**

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MISSION STATEMENT

"TO PRESERVE THE GENERAL AND ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF HANCOCK COUNTY AND TO PRESERVE THE KATE LOBRANO HOUSE AND COLLECTIONS THEREIN; TO RESEARCH AND INTERPRET LIFE IN HANCOCK COUNTY; AND TO ENCOURAGE AN APPRECIATION OF AND INTEREST IN HISTORICAL PRESERVATION."

people of the coast needed fast, affordable replacement shelter. And they also needed a way to reconnect with their hometowns' distinct character. They needed options beyond FEMA trailers and the typical house plans that would turn the coast to Anywhere, U.S.A. Charrette designers came through with nearly 100 designs for emergency housing, affordable housing serving longer-term needs, and storm-zone housing raised on stilt foundations. Through various mechanisms, these designs are beginning to influence home builders and to address the towering need for replacement housing in Mississippi, where an estimated 65,000 homes were lost to hurricane damage.

Progress is visible on a number of fronts:

**Housing Partnership for
Pearlington**

Through the cooperation of charrette architects and a non-profit housing coalition, people in Pearlington, MS, who lost their homes to Katrina are moving into sturdy, attractive temporary homes that contribute character to the neighborhoods in which they are built—and can easily be converted into attractive permanent houses down the road. The homes are specially adapted versions of 350-400 square-foot temporary homes available from New Hope Construction of Hendersonville, TN, one of the project partners. These furnished Habitat for Humanity homes can be purchased by residents after a gratis period

for the construction cost, generally reduced through donated materials and labor to between \$15,000 and \$18,000.

After Katrina struck, New Hope joined with several Florida-based organizations—The Seaside Community Foundation, Habitat for Humanity of Walton County, and Hurricane Helpers of South Walton, FL—to form the Walton County Hurricane Relief Coalition. At the request of Seaside, Florida, developer Robert Davis, executives of New Hope visited the Mississippi Renewal Forum, where architects Gary Justiss, R. John Anderson, and Susan Henderson showed how New Hope's existing designs could be modified to incorporate larger windows, a wider porch and other elements of the coastal vernacular. CNU-board member Ray Gindroz and his colleagues at Urban Design Associates provided additional advice based on their experience adapting high quality designs to the unique production conditions associated with Habitat projects.

The coalition included some of these features in the first seven homes they committed to build in Pearlington, most of which are now underway. With 14 additional homes awaiting building, the designs continue to move even closer to a faithful interpretation of the vernacular through further design guidance from Anderson. The first home was completed in December and went to Suzie Burton and Josh Ward, a couple in their seventies who rode Katrina by clinging to a post on the back porch of their former home as waters rose in Pearlington. The cou-



Construction crew works on Katrina Cottage 1.

ple was married in their new home just before Christmas.

COTTAGES TO CALL HOME

The 308 square-foot Katrina Cottage 1 was one of the smallest — and most attention getting — of the dozens and dozens of replacement houses conceived and sketched during the Mississippi Renewal forum.

Designed by New Yorker Marianne Cusato with tall windows, a generous porch, graceful proportions and an anticipated build-out cost somewhere below \$35,000, just about everything connected with the house is pure Mississippi. The captivating alternative to a bare-bone FEMA trailer landed on front page of the Biloxi-Sun Herald and became a hit with readers. They saw in it a temporary home they could inhabit with pride—and later turn into a guest-house or studio.

The tiny Katrina Cottage 1 — fine tuned by architect Michael Bar-

ranco, now fully realized in bright-yellow plank siding, pressure-treated wood, and galvanized sheet roofing—made a big impression after Jackson builder Jason Spelling and his crew constructed the prototype in a barn on the Mississippi Sate Fair Grounds. They completed it in 20 days and then took it to Florida to display for an estimated 100,000 attendees as a special exhibit at the International Builder's Show, held in Orlando in January 2006. Over a period of four days, thousands were introduced to the potential to provide affordable housing of considerable character to those whose homes were demolished by Katrina.

Built by Jackson, Mississippi, builder Jason Spellings with design assistance from Mississippi architect Michael Barranco and donated materials such as fiber-cement siding from sponsor James Hardie, the cottage left Orlando for display in Ocean Springs on the

Mississippi Coast before ultimately being donated to a Mississippi community. One of the goals of the exhibit was to find manufacturers interested in building the cottages in significant quantities. Cusato is optimistic that this mission was a success. She and her colleagues are currently in negotiations with several manufactures. Once under production, these cottages should be available in a variety of colors and materials for around \$35,000.

"People are loving it," Spelling said. "I can't tell you how many people have come by already and said they personally want one. I even talked to a guy who wants to make it his deer-hunting cabin." Developers who've toured the cottage have told Spelling and Cusato they're considering the design for high-end beach communities on other coasts.

That's not exactly what Cusato has in mind, but she takes it as affirmation that she achieved her purpose: To prove that affordable emergency housing in the wake of Hurricane Katrina didn't have to be a trailer that ends up in a landfill in 18 months. She downsized a perfectly scaled Mississippi-style coastal cottage, complete with inviting porch. She created clever built-in storage under porch benches and beneath bunk beds. And she gave the sparse interior space a roomy feel with oversized windows.

"The house is faithful to traditions, yet it's ingenious in how the storage is handled. You'd think you were in a much bigger space," said CNU President John



Workers give final touches.

Norquist. "It's no surprise that it's already starting to influence the housing market."

GULF COAST EMERGENCY PLAN BOOK

A publication from the New Urban Guild *The Gulf Coast Emergency Plan Book*—is turning designs from about 10 architects who were at the charrette into buildable house plans. The houses are "tiny houses" of about 200-800 square feet and "thin houses" of 500-1200 square feet. The latter are like traditional Gulf Coast shotgun cottages except that they have side hallways so residents can move between the front and back of the houses without having to walk through bedrooms and other private spaces. The Emergency Plan Book contains easy-to-follow plans for the developers, builders, and property own-

ers addressing the urgent need to replace homes destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.

Available soon at www.newurbanguild.com, the volume of emergency plans is actually the first in a series of plan books coordinated by Steve Mouzon, a charrette participant and principal founder of the New Urban Guild. Due out later this spring, the second book in the series, *Katrina Cottages*, will be a larger version of the *Emergency Plan* book, featuring about 40 buildable plans for houses designed with post-Katrina recovery in mind.

Due out this summer, the third book in the series, *Gulf Coast Houses*, will include coastal house types larger than cottages, published with the assistance of home products supplier James Hardie. These sec-

ond and third books in the series will be sold at half price to anyone ordering from within the Katrina-devastated areas and are expected to sell on newsstands and in builders' supply centers in the region.

In addition to honoring the regional vernacular, a hallmark of the work of many of the architects at the charrette, the building plans feature storm resistant foundations and frame reinforcement. The designs fit the narrow lots of coastal Mississippi's traditional neighborhoods and the new neighborhoods envisioned by the new urbanist planners.

Andres Duany, a CNU co-founder and the charrette's lead organizer, said the Katrina Cottage and related post-charrette efforts are models for giving Mississippi residents the high-quality designs they deserve. "Everything that you build here has to be this nice," Duany told an audience of builders at last week's conference, referring to the cottage. "What (communities) will do in exchange for you building to this standard is to make approvals easy and efficient."

SOURCE: <http://mississippirenewal.com>

Brown, Ben. *Katrina Cottage Unveiled, Affordable cottage a hit at builder's show.* (January 11, 2006).

Filmanowicz, Stephen and Emily Ziring: *Afordable Houses Address Gulf Needs, charrette designs begin to arise from the ground.* (January 16, 2006).

Photos by Sandy Sorlien

Looking for the Cottage

Charles and Dale took a ride out to Pearlinton looking for the Katrina House, although they didn't find it, (cont. on next p.)



Katerina Cottage 1 at the International builder's Show in Orlando, Florida. Thousands toured the show over a four day period.



Photo: Charles Gray

they did find another one being built on site by a group of young people. Some were members of the Americorp, others were members of Habitat for Humanity. They had just arrived, they said, from Sarpy County, Nebraska. The house was being built by Hope Construction from Hendersonville, Tn. It was 12 x 20 and quite compact. It wasn't completed, so it was hard to visualize where everything would be placed. One of the young people said the waiting list for these houses was quite long, but persons with special needs were given special consideration.

March 19, 1886 red letter day for City of Bay

In a communication mailed from Jackson, Mississippi and directed on March 19, 1886 to the Honorable James A. Ulman, Mayor of the City of Bay St. Louis was the long awaited approval of the Charter and Ordinances of the City of Bay St. Louis. A copy of this document is filed in the City Hall, and although dog-eared from continuous use and multi-patched by caring people who have tried to preserve it, the 69 pages are faded, tattered, but legible.

Every conceivable situation that could confront a little newly incorporated city was spelled out, together with whose specific duty it was to make suitable correction, and what punishment should be meted out against offenders. The City was run by a mayor, four aldermen, a secretary, tax collector, treasurer, and marshal. It was up to the marshal to take care of such thorny problems as disposal of dogs, hogs, goats, horses, vicious animals, tramps, vagrants and prostitutes. He was given command to poison the dogs, impound the animals and sell them at public auction to recoup cost.

Property owners had the responsibility of keeping the banquettes (sidewalks) in front of their residences or places of business clear and free from all trash, dirt, slush or slops and to keep the space in front of the lands, lots or houses, owned or occupied by him or her or them of 100 feet, if fronting on the sea, or across the street if any other part of the city, clear of weeds or filth. This ruling came under the heading of Nuisances and the Street

Commissioner looked after enforcement and was also charged with the responsibility of seeing that dead animal carcasses were removed from the city limits. Ti was also considered a nuisance to erect a jake or privy in "any space where the same shall be offensive to persons, or to persons passing along the streets or highways. Disturbing the quietude by, boisterous and wanton or malicious knocking at or near the door of window of any residence, storehouse or business was also tabu as was throwing offal or scraps from the kitchen in culverts, gutters or on property of others. (cont. next month)

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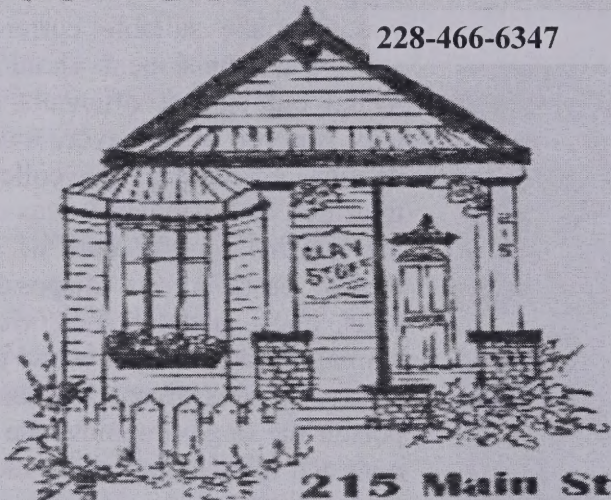
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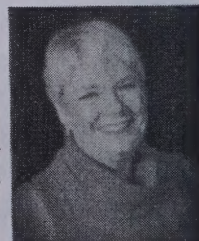
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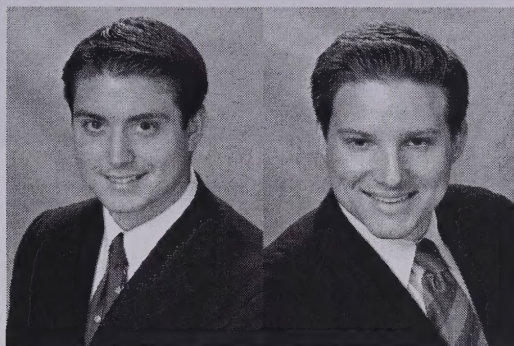
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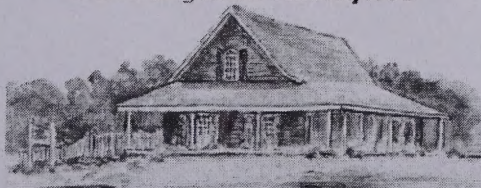
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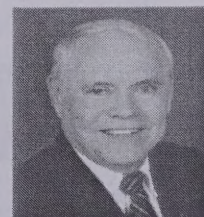
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